

THE
HOARY HEAD
CROWNED.

A Sermon Preached at BRACKLEY at the

Funerall of

F R A N: WALBANK,

A

Very Aged and Religious M A T R O N.

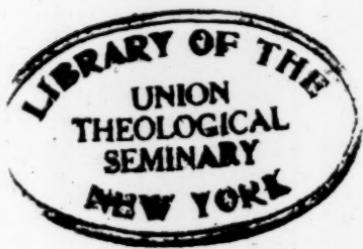
B T

*Thomas Hedges B. D. Rector of Souldern, and
lately one of the Sen: Fellows of S^t Johns
Coll. Cambridge.*



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TO HIS
VERY AGED AND MUCH HONOURED
Grand-father. JOHN MORLEY.

Sir,

CONDON having multiplied your dayes to Four-score yeares and upwards, and your Seed to above an hundred, and in both respects honored you; Give me leave I pray you, (who under God, had my being from you at first, and many blessings since) according to my bounden duty, to Endeavour (so far as I am able) to honour you before the people. The truth is this Text I designed to have preached upon to your ears; but that purpose miscarrying, I am bold to present it here into your hands. And because, through distance of place and other Impediments, I cannot hope to Preach often to you, or speak with you face to face; I shall not content my selfe with the bare tender of one single Sermon to your eyes; But shall take upon me with your favour, to direct you how to Preach to your selfe dayly, when other preachers are absent, or silent, or cannot through your age be heard; And how to Commune with your own heart, and speak to your self, when you have none else with whom you may converse, or when your self may be speechlesse. To this purpose, that the Preacher in your bosome (your own conscience) may never want a seasonable Text, and matter for a soul-saving Sermon, let me Com-

mend to your most serious study and dayly meditation especially three Scripture-DIALOGUES, or Conferences, & two precious promises. The Conferences are these.

1. That which you read in the 2. of Samuel: 19:34,35, 36. which was betwixt King David and Barzillai; wherein you may see the vanity of all earthly delights, especially in old age.

2. That of Christ, & Nicodemus a master in Israel Iohn: 3:4,5,6,7. vers: Wherein is taught the necessity of regeneration to all, old and young, before they can enter into the Kingdom of heaven; and where is made good that other saying, which is written 2.Corinth:5.17. If any man (whether young or old) be in Christ he is a new creature.

3. That betwixt our Saviour and Martha concerning her brother Lazarus : Iohn 11: 21,22,23,24, 25, 26, 27. where we find, that beleeving in the Lord Iesus (which in Ioh:7: 37,38. is expounded to be a coming unto him) is the only way to attain to life in and after death, even to attain to the resurrection of the dead.

The Promises are First, that which is recorded Esaiyah: 46:4,5. which although it be propounded to the house of Iacob in generall, yet it truly and particularly belongs to every one that is an Israelite indeed: Hearken unto me, O house of Iacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel , which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, and even to your old age I am he, and even to hoarie haires will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carrie, and I will deliver you.

The other is written Hos: 13. 14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave : I will redeem them from death : O death I will be thy plagues : O grave I will be thy destruction. I know 'tis true, that it is appointed to men once to dye, Heb. 9. 27. Notwithstanding

standing this promise. Yet the blessed Apostle Paul assures us that at last, This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortall must put on immortality, and that the time will come whē shal be brought to passe, the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. 1 Cor. These two promises, laid hold on by faith, may serve us two staves, and both of them staves of beauty, wherewith to support your old age, and to stay you when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and near the mouth of the pit, that you fall not. I shall no further preach to you, but leave the application to the Preacher within you above mentioned. Yet I shall not let you goe till I pray for you, and bleſſe you. 'Tis more usuall for Parents to lay up prayers and bleſſings for their Children, then Children for their Parents: Yet I remember that Melchizedech, the Preift of the High-God, bleſſed Abraham the father of the faithfull: And consider that it is one part of the Preifts office to bleſſe the people; And therefore I hope, that (being a preacher descended from your own loynes, and having in this Epistle and Sermon thus taken upon me to preach to you) I shall not be offensive, if herein I come unto you too, as a minister in the fulnesse of the bleſſings of the Goffel of Christ, if I bleſſe you also; O my father. The Lord convince you more and more of the need of a Saviour, of the worth of Jesus: The Lord help you to roll your self living and dying upon the mercies of God & the merits of Christ: You have a double Crown already, that of a hoary head, and that of a Grand-father, (for Childrens Children are the Crown of old men: Prov:17:6. But both these are Corruptible: Oh that you may have a Crown of righteousnesſe, that Crown of Glory which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you: May your Gray haires never come with sorrow to the grave: but that after God hath added to your dayes (if it be his will) many more years, your good old age.

age (in which, Solomon saith, we shall say, we have no pleasure) may be swallowed up in a happy and blessed Eternity: And that you may for ever there enjoy God our and your first and last father, and live with him; In whose presence is fulnesse, of Joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

So prayeth,

Your most Dutifull and

Novemb. 23: 1652.

Affectionate Sonne

Thomas Hodges.





Prov. 16. 31.

The Hoary Head is a crowne of Glory, if it be found in the way of Righteousnesse.

עוזרת הפהארם שיבת מירן צתקה חפצא



HE Text is the old mans Patent of Honour. The *hoary head*, that is *old age*, or the *old man*, is a *crowne of glory*, that is, is *honourable and glorious*, is to be *reverenced and honoured* by us: As we reverence those upon whose heads men set crownes and Diadems of silver and gold; so especially ought we

to honour those men, whom the God of heaven (the first fountaine of all Honour) doth crown with a *Hoary head*, or *white haires*, by reason of age. The latter part of the verse is diversly translated; some have it thus, *it is found*, or *shall be found* in the way of *righteousnesse*: and then the sense is this, *honorable old age is to be attained in the way of righteousness*, or to live well is the way to live long. Our last translators have put in the word *if* which is not in the Originall, to note that then old men are most to be honoured when they are *religious*, when they walk in the way of *righteousnesse*. according as the *Geneva* translation hath it. *Age is a Crowne of glory when it is found in the way of righteousness*. Both these translations hold forth a trnth, viz: that God doth give long life.

(6)

life to godly & Religious men: & that we ought to give more
especiall honour to holy and religious old men. Those men,
who besides the silver crown of old age, have upon
their heads the golden crown of religion, are most ho-
noured by God, and ought so to be by men. The summe
of all may amount to thus much. *viz. That a good old age
which God usually, or ordinarily, bestowes upon good
men, is honourable, and glorious; or ought to render them
very honourable in our eyes.*

I shall take occasion from this Text to treat of the
honour of old age, and to that purpose I shall endeavour
to shew,

1. That old age is honourable and glorious.
2. Why old age is so honourable.
3. How we are to honour old age.
4. By what meanes we may attain to the honour
of old age.
5. What is that old age upon which God and good
men, bestow the most abundant honour.

1. Of the first. Old age is truly honourable, Whether
we consult the law of Scripture, or the law of an-
tire; either God's or man's Heraldrie.

1. God hath commanded us to honour the hoarie
head; thus shall it be done to the man whom the King
of heaven delighteth to honour. *Levit. 19.32. Thou
shalt rise up before the hoarie head, and honour the face of
the old man, and fear thy God;* as ever thou fearest the
Lord thy God, see that thou reverence age; yea
'tis the first commandement with promise. *Eph: 6. 7.*
That which requires us to honour old age under the
name of father and mother, tis the first commandement
which hath any speciall promise annexed unto it; old
men are comprehended within this commandement as
fathers, and old women, as mothers. *1.Timoth: 5.1,2. re-
buke*

buke not an elder, but intreat him as a father and the younger men as brethren: the elder women as mothers &c. And, because the mother is usually most despised, therefore 'tis thought that in *Levit: 19:3.* God commands the fear of the mother, in the first place, saying, *Ye shall fear every man his Mother and his Father.* Again, because the devill will teach us to break over the hedg where 'tis lowest, namely to slight our mother in her old age, because of the weaknesse of her sex, and of the infirmites of old age concurring together: therefore hath God not left himselfe without witnesse, nor us without warning against this sin; But hath made especiall provision to stop this gap and to make up, and make strong this fence, with that saying *Proverbs 23:22.* *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee and despise not thy mother when shee is old:*

2. The Scripture makes *this* an argument of the dissolution of all politie and good government in a Kingdome or State, when the aged are not duely honoured. So much is intimated: *Esa: 3:5.* *the child shall behave himselfe proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.* And indeed when once it comes to this, that every boy, or young stripling, dares demean himself insolently towards the ancient, whom he ought to reverence & honour; then behold confusion in every state according as is threatned *Esa. 24:2,3.* Then farewell all good order and distinction and regard of persons in Church and State, It was a sad presage of the ruine of the Jewes, that *they respected not the persons of the Priests, and that they favoured not, or accepted not, the elders, or ancients.* *Lament: 4:16.* If we understand the place of the Jewes, as some: Or else it is accounted *barbarousnesse* even in an enemy, not to respect calling, or age, not to respect the *Priests*, not to favour the *Elders*, if we understand the

the place of the *Chaldeans*, as others. Agreeable hereunto we read in *2:Chron:37:17*: that the King of the *Chaldees* had no compassion on young man or maiden , old man or him that stooped for age.

3. We find in *1:Sam: 2:30*: that when God threatened *Eli's* house to degrade them from their honour; he presently addeth *v:31,32,33*: (once and again) there shall not be an old man in thy house; and a third time: all the increase of thine house shall dye in the flower of their age: But on the contrary, to dye in a good old age, is spoken of as a blessing, *Job 5:26*: thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn: commeth in in his season: that is, as the corn stands against all stormes of wind and rain untill it be fully ripe, and then is gathered into barn, (being first made up in shocks,) so shalt thou stand upon the earth, and not be ruined, or reaped whilst thou art green, till thou art ripe and full of dayes; and then, and not till then, shalt thou come to thy grave as ripe corne into barne. Yea tis promised to *jerusalem*, after the returne from the Captivity, *Zachar: 8: 4*: that there should yet old men and old women dwell in her streets, and every man with his staff in his hand for verie age. Let me add that *Romans 9:4*: tis reckoned amongst the honourable priviledges of the *Israelites* (as that *Jesus Christ* was their brother according to the flesh, so) that theirs were the *Fathers*. And thus much may suffice for the Blazoning of this ancient Coat of Honour according to Scripture Heraldrie.

I might also shew, how the *Gentiles*, who had only the light of *nature*, yet did reverence and honour old age. *Plato* in his Common-wealth, ordered, that the *Elders* should be honoured. *Ovid* tells us how of old time they were reverenced amongst the *Romanes*. *Lib:5. Fast.*

Magna fuit quondam capitis reverentia cani,

Inque suo precio ruga semolis erat.

Juvenal

Juvenal saith, that in the golden age, they counted it a *capital* crime if a young man, (though a rich man, did not rise up to an old man, though a poore man,) *Juvenal Sat. 13.*

*Credebant hoc grande nefas & morte piandum,
Si Juvenis vetulo non assurerit. &c.*

And this may suffice to have been spoken for the proof of the first thing propounded, namely, that old age is honourable and glorious

II. Of the second. viz: *Why old men are so honourable.*

1. Because they are an honour to the place where they live: *living monuments of Honour.* They honour *us*, and therefore 'tis but reason we should honour *them*. Antiquity is very attractive; that side old men goe on usually bears the greatest sway and authority: Old men are loadstones to draw younger ones their way. And truly there was not so great a contest about the young child before *Solomō whose it was*; as there is to this day betwixt us Protestants and the Papists, about the *ancient fathers* of the Primitive Church: The Romanists say, the *fathers* are theirs; and We say, *Nay*, but the *fathers* are *ours*: nor without marvell for *non sum melior patribus* (I am not better then the *fathers*,) is a Motto well becomming the best man, and greatest Scholar.

2. Because they are an help to the societies, whereof they are members, in respect of their *wisdom* and *prudence*, much increased by their long *experience* in humane affairs. As they are the *Crown* of a people, so they are their *council*. The great court of the Jewes was cal'd the *council* of the *seventy Elders*: and the great court of Rome the *Senat*, & their *Counsellours Senators* (from *senes* old men,) and *Fathers*, *Patres conscripti*; and in the New Testament, the Church confistorie is cal'd the *Eldership*; and the *Church-officers, Presbyters or Elders*.

From all which, we may gather, that the Judgment of old men, is usually better then of younger men: according to that *Job Ch: 12:12.* *with the ancient is wisdome and in length of days is understanding.* This is likewise intimated *Levit:11:32.* where instead of *thou shalt rise up before the hoarie head:* the *Chaldee Paraphrase hath it, thou shalt rise up before the wise.* And *Esa:3.2.* God threatens to take away frō Judah & Jerusalem, as *the mighty man and the man of warr, so the prudent and the Ancient:* The prudent and ancient are equivalent termes. Tis very remarkable that when *Rehoboam* forsook the advice of the old Counsellers, he soon lost ten tribes at a clap.

3. Because old men are, in a sort, *God's deputies and vice-roys* here in the world. They seem nearer to approach to the ancient of daies, then the young generation doe. I know indeed that , properly and strictly, God is not old: for *vetus Deus aliquando non erit: as novus Deus aliquando non fuit:* for that which waxeth old, saith the Scripture, is neer unto vanishing away, yet he is stil'd in Scripture the *Ancient of daies;* the *Everlasting Father;* the *God of Eternity.* And it is an argument, that the religion of the Gentiles was not the most ancient, because their Gods were but younglings: their genealogy and pedigree was known. It was objected by *Arnobius* to the heathen, that not onely *recens nata erat eorum religio, sed et dii ipsi erant infantes & parvuli* and such as had need of milk, and not of strong meat, such as were their sacrifices of sheep, &c.

III. Of the third, *How we are to honour old men.*

1. We must *rise up before the hoarie head.* *Levit.19:32.* God proclaims before them, as *Phar.10h* caused to be proclaimed before *Joseph, Abrech i.e. Bow the knee:* Or not much unlike to that which was proclaimed before *Mordecai, by the commandement of Ahasueroß.*

Loe

Loe thus shal it be done to the good old man, whō the King of heaven delights to honour. God who is himselfe no accepter of Perfons, or faces, yet commands us to respect the Person, or face of the old man.

2 We must speak honourably of them, and reverently to them. *1 Timoth: 5. 1, 2. rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, &c.* In the 2 of Kings: *13. 14.* We find even wicked King *Joash*, King of Israel, coming to visit the old Prophet *Elisha* when he was sick; weeping over his face, *Oh my father, my father; the Charets of Israel and the horsemen thereof*: bewailing *Elisha*, with the same words, wherewith he had, above 50 years before bewailed his master *Elija*: *Ch: 2:v. 12.* of the same Book.

3: Give old men the honour of speaking first, and the honour of due attention. *Job 32. 7: I said, dayes should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdome.* Let old men in *Civills* be your Oracles: the Poets fain young *Phaeton*, to have set the world on fire: You will find it, for the most part, no fiction, that young men are the hot-spurs the *Incendiaries*, w^{ch} set Church & state on a flame:

IV Of the fourth, *How we may attain to the honour of old age.*

I answer, We may find it in the way of righteousness; *Seek the kingdome of God and his righteousness.* Get part in the righteousness of Christ; and, as he is righteous so be ye righteous in all manner of Conversation; & this is indeed *Via recta ad vitam longam*, the right way to long life, yea to everlasting life; for godlinesse hath the promises of this life, and of that which is to come. *1 Tim: 4:8.* And again, *the fear of the Lord prolongeth dayes, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened*, *Prov: 10:27.* add to this, that of the Psalmist *Ps: 55:23. the bloody and deceitfull man shall not live out half his dayes: His sun shall goe down before tis noon:* But more particularly: *1 Get*

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spirituall saving wisdome, that is, get Christ, and he will give thee long life, *Prov: 16:3.* and *4. 20, 21, 22.* And truly Christ the *wisdom* of the *father*, he hath life, to bestow, and to whomsoever he will he giveth it. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, (saith Christ) that is, I am the true way unto life. With Christ is the well-spring, the fountain of *life*, of *naturall, spirituall, and eternall life*: Ask of him, and he will give thee *living water*. He hath *living water* and *living bread*, and a *tree of life* to give thee: and he that eats or drinks of these, shall live for ever. *David* saith, *This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him*; and for what did he ask, and did God hear him? He asked life of him, and he gave him *life*, even *length of daies* for ever and ever. *Psalme 21: 4.* verse.

2 Long life is to be attained by our *honouring* of & *obedience* to our parents and *elders*. *Exod: 20. Honour thy father & thy mother, that they may lengthen thy dayes:* *לְאַרְכָּן תְּיוֹסֵד* *prolongabunt dies tuos.* Obedient children are children of many prayers, and the parents prayers, are the meanes under God, whereby is procured to them *long life*. Hence Parents prayers are called *blessings*. Besides 'tis equal, (saith one) that such as honour those bywhom they receive life next under God, should have their life continued and prolonged.

3 If thou desirest life and lovest many dayes, that thou mayest see good, *keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile*, *Ps: 34:12, 13. 1 Peter 3, 10.* Again, the wise man speaks exprefly, *Prov: 18, 21. death and life are in the power of the tongue, and he that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life*, *Prov: 13:3.* Many mens tongues are such sharp swords and razours, as to cut their own throats.

4. *Live much in heaven*, if thou wouldest *live long upon*

upon the earth. Ps. 91. 14, 15, 16. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high because he hath known my name: He shall call upon me and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him: with long life will I satisfy him and shew him my salvation. When God sees men earthly minded, 'tis just with him to bring them speedily to the earth, to say unto them Earth Earth Earth hear the word of the Lord: Earth thou art and unto Earth shalt thou return; I see thou art an Earthworm, and to the wormes of the Earth shalt thou goe: Thy flesh shall be for meat unto the wormes of the Earth. Oh get more and more, nearer & nearer acquaintance, with God; who is our life and the length of our dayes: In his favour is life; the sense & assurance of his love is a Cordiall wil renew our strength and renew our yonth, like the Eagles. Moses who talked with God as a man with his friend, Oh how vigorous fresh and lively was he how green and flourishing was he to, and in, old age. Deut: 34. 7. 'tis said his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated: Enoch walked with God, and was translated and saw no Corruption.

The beloved disciple John, who lay most in the bosom of Christ, and had afterwards the greatest revelations of the mind of Christ concerning his Church; He it was who survived all the rest of the Apostles upon earth. Paul likewise, who whilst he lived upon earth was rapt up into the third heavē, He was such an one as Paul the aged (so he styles himselfe) before he dyed: he had the Crown of old age before the Crown of Martyrdom.

But you'll say, many times the best and towardliest children, & most righteous young men, dye soonest, & never attain to old age: are cropt either in the bud or blossom, or whilst they are green & flourishing, whilst their breasts are full of milk, and their bones of marrow. We usually

usually say, of those who are remarkably forward in Religion and goodness above their fellows, they are not like to live long, they are too good for this world. *εγενετο θεος, οντοντανονταν, whom God loves best he takes first.* How is it then, you teach us, that Religion and righteousness, holiness, and heavenly-mindedness, are the way to attain to a good old age? especially, when 'tis sometimes notoriously known that wicked men have the largest portion, as of the things of this life, so of life it selfe.

Ans. As concerning religious children which dye soon: I answer, It may be their Parents doate too much upon them; It may be, they Idolize them: As the wicked Israelites sometimes offered their children unto Idols, unto devils; So too often 'tis seen, that good Parents are too too apt to make little gods, that is indeed Idols of their children. And hence God is provoked to take from such Parents the desire and delight of their eyes, and the dearly beloved of their soules. Parents, you may kill your children with overmuch kindness: You may kill the child with *overloving it*, as the Nurse doth sometimes with *overlaying it*. If you lay or hang too great a weight, or lean too hard, (that is trust too much) upon one of these young and tender branches, you will soon break it off the Tree of life. Children are flowers; if you carry them too much in your bosome, they will wither and dye. Oh then forsake not the living God; If you would have right to the living child, least God call this finne to remembrance, and slay your child even the choycest of them.

Or, 2. I say it may be, God takes away such children from the evill to come; either from *temptations* which they are likely to be exposed unto, and in danger to be overcome by; or from the *evill day coming upon*

on the place where they lived. God saies in such cases, oh my sonne, or oh my daughter, enter into thy chamber, shut the door, till these calamities be overpast. When there's danger abroad, then Parents look out and fetch home their little ones; and so doth God.

Or, 3. I affirme, that these children live much in a little time; that these children are *young in years* as *Jo-sias* was, 2 Chron: 34. 3. but *old in grace*; that these are the children which dye an hundred years old, as 'tis Es: 65. 20. these are like nimble Racers, who run as far in an houre as some heavy heeld horses will goe in a day: these are apt schollers, who having betimes learnt their lesson, may have leave to goe home the sooner: their work is soon done, and the Lord of heaven and earth call them home to receive their reward.

Or 4. It may be said, that these children's losse of temporall life is abundantly recompenced with eternal life. God promised *long life*, and he gives them *everlasting life*, doth he doe them any wrong? he promised them a *penny in silver*, and payes them a pound in *Gold*, yea a talent of gold, and is he not as good, and better then his word? he promised such the silver crown of old age, that *corruptible* crown, and he gives them the crown of *glory*, of *everlasting life*, a crown which is *incorrputible*, and fadeth not away.

As for good men who dye young, those who are the glory of their time, and yet dye in the flower of their age; I say, 'tis either because of some disobedience, or unrighteousnesse before grace, or after grace received, for w^{ch} God pleaseth thus temporally to correct them; of this latter sort were the unworthy Communicants at Corinth. 1. Cor. 11. to whom the bread of *life* became, through their default, the bread of *death*. Or because men doat too much upon these men, and begin to give

the glory of God unto these, upon whom they see his image and superscription. Or, where 'tis otherwise, the cases and examples are very rare; a few exceptions from the generall rules; and such as have, although a short life, yet a sweet; such as have the life of life, that is, the comforts and blessings of life in abundance, whilst they live, such as have enough of the things of this life, and of life it selfe as much as is good for them, and of the favour of God very much, which is better then life it selfe: and when they dye, they are paid with usurie in heaven for the losse of a temporary life here. Of whom I may say, in a sence, as it was said of *Enoch*, they *are not*, because *God hath taken them*; they walked with God, & they are translated to him.

As for wicked men, who sometimes attain to a long life, it may be said that they *are* a great while, rather then that they *live* a great while, as it was said of one, *diu fuit, non diu vixit*: and, as we say of a ship, which hath been a long time tossed too and fro by stormes and tempests, but hath not all that while tended towards the harbour, that she hath been thus long *driven to and fro*, but hath not thus long *sailed*: So we may say of wicked men, they have been a great while tossed to and fro in the sea of this world, but they have not sailed long, because they have come never the nearer to the haven of rest, after all their toile and labour. Whilst wicked men live they are farr from God, in whose presence is life, from whose favour is the comfort and crown of life, they have bitterness in their greatest sweets, and death in their life. The longest life of the wicked is but a moment, compared to eternity; the sinner of an hundred years old *lives* not so long, but he may be truly and properly said to *dye* eternally.

To dismisse the objection briefly, know that this is a generall

general rule of Gods own making, that godlinesse hath the promise of this life , and of that which is to come. With long life will God reward and satisfie the righteous man ; and at last shew him his salvation in heaven in the life everlasting. When it falls out otherwise , as to temporall , 'tis either rare , and that losse abundantly repayed in eternall life; or else 'tis a *Chastisement* for some irregular and exorbitant demeanour of our selves , or others in relation to us. 'Tis true as the Preacher saith, that *all things fall alike to all*; that is, frequently 'tis so , and that sometimes 'tis worst in outward & worldly respects with the best of men , *of whom the world is not worthy* ; Yet when it is so , the fault is in good men themselves , God is as it were constrained, for the love he beares their precious soules , to make exceptions from his generall rule, which is *doe well and have well* both here and hereafter. *Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him: and here the hoary head is a crown of glory, and it is found in the way of righteousness.*

V. And thus are we come to our fifth head, to shew, *what is that old age which is most honourable*. Although all old men (as old men) are in that respect honourable, yet they are not all *Peeres* of the Kingdome of heaven. Some Translations render the Text , *When 'tis found in the way of righteousness.*

Surely the Elders that live well are worthy of *double honour* ; honour these Elders for they are honourable indeed. Tis recorded *Act: 21. 16.* to the honour of *Mnason* , that he was *an old Disciple*. Seniority in the society of Saints , as Saints, should have honour. The Apostle *Paul* makes honourable mention of the Elder Converts, *Rom: 16.7.* *Salute Andronicus, and Junia my kinsmen, and my fellow Prisoners* , who are of note among the Apostles , who also were in Christ before me. But on

the other side, the sinner of an hundred yeares old is accursed, *Esa: 65. 20.* Or as the *Wiseman* saith, Though a sinner doe evill an hundred times, and his dayes be prolonged: yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that feare God, which feare before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his daies which are as a shadow, because he feareth not before God, *Ecclesiastes 8.12.13.* Sinners may say, though never so hoary headed, the crown is fallen from our head, woe unto us that we have sinned.

If you ask why *Religious* old men are worthy of the greatest honour: I answer,

1. Because these fathers are all, the sonnes of the most high, every one the Son of a King, of the great King of heaven and earth: and they resemble their heavenly Father, they who are holy as he is holy. And although Gods children are an assembly of first borne; yet the elder any one is in grace, the greater portion of honour ought he to have from, and above his brethren. If the elder by naturall generation and birth be to have *double honour*, surely the elder by regeneration and a spirituall new birth much more. We find that good *Shem* & *Isaak* and *Jacob*, though younger ones, got the birth-right-blesing and honour, before their elder brethren.

2. Because religious men are the truely wise men, and the longer and greater experience any one hath had in religion, he is the more wise, and therefore more honourable. We read *Mat: 2.1.* that there were *wise men* came to seek Jesuſ, to worship him, truely they are deservedly called wise men, who ever seek Jesuſ, and when they find him, worship him. They say the *Turkes* account all *fooles*, *saints*; and many amongst us Christians, account all *saints* *fooles*. But the holy Scriptures, which alone are able to make us wise unto Salvation, teach otherwise.

therwise. Heare the word of the Lord, *Job 28.28. And unto man he said, Behold the feare of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evill, is understanding.* And if we will beleeve the wisest of men (*Solomon*) the *Godly* man is the *wise man*, but the *Sinner* is the *foole*; as appeares by his opposing the sinner, & the wiseman *Ecclesiastes 9.18. One such wise man* may be a means to *deliver a City*. *Ecclesiastes 9.16.* and upon that accompt ought to be honoured. Yea *2 Samuel 20.16. &c.* Tis recorded that a *wise woman* saved the *City Abel*, that it perished not in the Rebellion of *Sheba* the sonne of *Bichri*.

3. Because these religious old men are most beneficiall , are the greatest blessings , to the persons with whom , and to the places where they live ; they are the Walls and Bullworks of a City, they are the foundations and pillars of a Nation , they are the Shields of the earth.

Q. But what is the *speciall honour*, which we must do *religious old men*?

A. We must reverence them *inwardly*, in our hearts, and *outwardly* , not in *word* and in *tongue* only , but in *deed* and in *truth*. Whilst these precious Sonns of *Sion*, our Fathers, and Elders , goe on in heaven-way before us. Let us stand by them , and stand for them, and in nothing be wanting to them : and when any of them goes up to *heaven* before us, let that be the language of our hearts, which was spoken by *Elisheba* at the taking up of *Elijah, my father, my father, the Chariot of Israel* , and the *horsemen thereof*.

2. We must obey these mens Counsailes, and directions. Let's make them , under *God*, and the *Scripture*, our *Oracles* : Let the counsell of the Elders, be our great and supream Councell : Let's honour these as good *Job* was honoured. *Ch:29.21. &c.* Let's give care to these , let their speech drop upon us, let us waite for them

man better then his mother, (*viz.* his wife) but he must honour still his mother before his wife. Consider her grievous pangs in bringing us forth at first, & her great paines in bringing us up: and she that bare with the thousand infirmities , weaknesses and follies of our infancie and childhood; Let her be borne withall for some weaknesses of her sex, in her old age: according as it is written *Prov:22.22. despise not thy mother, when she is old.* And now to conclude this Use, Oh that the great peace-maker, after that our families have been divided, Father against Son, and Son against Father, the Daughter against the Mother, and the Mother against the Daughter, would (according to his promise once made to the Jewes, *Mal:4.*) Convert or turn the hearts of the fathers to the children , and of the children to their fathers, lest he come and smite our land with a curse.

3. Then honour *old men*, especially *religious* old men. It was Idolatrie, to fall down and worship the golden Image, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had set up; but 'tis Religion, to fall down and worship, with Civil worship or reverence , the religious *old man* , whom God hath set up. Goe forth, O ye sons and daughters of Jerusalem, and behold the *good old man*, with the *Crown* wherewith his heavenly father hath crowned him, in the day of his *hoary head*.

4. Is a good old age to be found in the way of religion and righteousness? Oh then let the young generation, who desire to live long, and to see good dayes, let them hence be exhorted to pietie and holinesse. Come ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the way to live to be honoured old men; live well if you would live long, The more you live to God, the longer you'll live in the world. the Papists have a saying, that *Nemo senescit dum interest Missa*, that is, that no man

man is never the oldest for the time he spendes in hearing Mass. Truly the time we spend in religion, and religious exercises, is time well saved, is time redeemed. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, their youth shall be renewed like the Eagles. *Ps. 103.* But as for evill doers, the Lord shall wound the haire scalp, and the hoarie head too, of him that goes on in his wickednesse if he live to age. Well therefore doth the wise man advise, *Ecclesiastes 7.17.* *Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish, why shouldest thou dye before thy time?* Men naturally desire to prolong their dayes: To this end, what *dyet* will they not keep? what *exercises* will they not use? what *Medicines* will not they take? *skin for skin and all that a man hath will he give for his life.* The Princes and Potentates of the earth have their Physitians to counsell them alway what course to take, that they may live long upon the earth: But behold I shew unto you all this day a more excellent way; and that is the way of the text, the way of righteousness. Get the Crown of *religion*, if you would have that other crown of a *hoarie head*. The same way that leads to *Eternall* life, leads to a *long* life.

More particularly; as ever you would live to a good old age, Beware of those speciall sins, which ordinarily cut the thred of mens lives before the time; which either as *thieves doe wast*, or as *winds blow out* the candle of life before it is burnt half to the socket.

1. As first, If thou desirest to live to be old, take heed of *Cains* sin, the sin of blood-guiltinesse: he that is guilty of blood, may Justly fear, least every one that meets him should slay him. The Hue and Crie, the blood-hound, the Avenger of blood, doth ordinarily overtake such before old age. Justice saith, *Give him blood to drink for he is worthy.*

2: The sin of *uncleanness*, whether naturall, or unnatural. For *Onan's* sin the Lord slew him. God rained down fire from heaven upon the unclean Sodomites and destroyed them speedily; the Lord made a short work with them: and *Prov: 7. 22.* 'tis said, *He that follows an harlot, goes as an Ox to the slaughter. Shechem's* sin of uncleanness with *Dinah*, cost him, his father and the Shechemites their lives. So *Amnon's* incest with his sister *Tamar* cost him his life.

3. *Disobedience to Parents.* When *Hophni* and *Phinehas* hearkned not to the voyce of their father, it was a signe and presage that the Lord would slay them. *Ab-solom's* rebellion, against his father *David*, caused his sun to set at noon. When the children of *Bethel* mock'd the Prophet *Elisha*, saying, *goe up thou bald head &c.* (that is, why doest not thou goe up to heaven after thy master) *two shee Bears* tore *42* of them. *2 King: 2.24.*

4. *Covetousnesse*, especially if dyed in *oppresſion*, and *injustice*. Immoderate cares, feares, and excessive turmoiling, the usuall concomitants of them that will be rich, do *naturall*ly shorten the life of man: but besides an untimely death seems to be the penalty denounced against this sinne, according to the Statute Law of the great Lawgiver, *Jerem: 17. 11.* *As the Partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth goods, and not by right, shall leave them in the midſt of his dayes, and at his end shall be a foole.* As the Partridg gathereth eggs together to sit on, and to hatch, but hatcheth them not, her eggs either proving windy and addle, as they say it oft falleth out with those eggs which she hath produced (as she doth frequently) without the company of the male, or otherwise miscarrying, (the male many times breaking them that he may have the company of his mate.) Or else (as some others think) the Partridg, or *Heb: נָרַק Kore*, having got together the eggs

eggs of other Fowles; and sitting on them as her own, untill they be hatched , they then leave her, and keep with, and follow those of their own kind. So Covetous men desirous to enrich themselves by oppression, and taking from others that which is not their owne, and sitting brooding upon the eggs, or baggs, which they have thus gathered together , at last these their riches take themselves wings and fly away. *Prov: 23.5. or they are taken from them. Luk. 12. 20.*

5. Is the hoarie head a crown of glory, if it be fouud, or when it is found, in the way of righteousnesse ? then hence we learn , that want of religon in an old man is a great abatement of honour in his *Coat*. The best flower in his garland , the choyceſt pearl of his crown, is wanting, The old sinner , together with his crown, hath a curse upon his head ; *the sinner of a hundred years old is accursed.* As God and man love an old Friend, so they hate and abhorre an old Enimie. Old *sinners* are like old *toads*, and old serpents, the fullest of poyſon, and therefore most abominable. He is an old *Thiefe*, (faith the Judge) away with him, *Away with him* , 'tis not fit such an one ſhould live. So ſaith God, he is an old *Idolater, drunkard, unclean person, sweareſt, &c.*: I have borne with him theſe forty , fifty, or ſixty years and upwards, I crowned every one of theſe years with my goodneſſe, but (ungratefull , unworthy , wretch !) he hath gone on to rebeſt againſt me, and goes on to this day and will not turne; Now therefore, oh ye evill angels , this night, or this week, or this yeare , ſee ye that yee require his ſoule of him; or els, oh death let not his hoarie head goe down to the grave in peace , (as *David charged Solomon concerning Joab* , *1 King: 2. 6.*) or, oh thou ſword of the Lord , his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood (as *David charg'd Solomon concerning Shimea*. *1 King: 2.9.*)

Oh consider this, ye old men, that have forgotten God, dayes without number, even to this day and hour, consider this your cnrſed latter end, if you will not turn your feet into the way of righteousneſſe; least God tear you in peeces, and there be none to deliver you. For know it for a truth, that the wicked and unrighteous, be they old or young, ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God.

Againe, Is old age then honourable when found in the way of righteousneſſe? Then hence young men may learn how farre they may honour their Fathers and Elders with the honour of imitation, how farre they may follow their ſteps, *viz.* no farther then they walk in the way of righteousneſſe, then they follow Christ. The old Prophet at *Bethel* deceived the young Prophet, the Devil, in the habit of an old man, in *Samuel*'s mantle, deceived *Saul*: the *Gibeonites* deceived *Josuah*, and the Princes of *Israel*, with their old mouldy bread, old ſhoes, & old garments. And alas, how many thouſands amongst us have been ſeduced, even to oppoſe and fight againſt reformation, upo no other account but this, these men will change our old cuſtomes, & our old converſations, or manner of converſation received by tradition from our Fathers. And here let me freely ſpeak unto you old men of this generation: God would have had off your bark of unprofitable Ceremonies, and have made you white and ſtraight ſtaues, even ſtaues of beauty in his hand, and this would not be done without putting you in the flames of a Civill Warr a while.

And now be wife ye old men, and as you love your ſelves ſee that you oppoſe not reformation; if you ſtand in Gods way, now that he comes as a Refiners fire to purify his Churches from all their tiri, and all their droſſe, he'l burn up the old oakes of *Baſhan*, as very briers and thornes.

6. And therefore let me, in the next place, entreat all you old men, to suffer a word or two of exhortation from this Text. Be hence perswaded, oh all ye Elders of the congregation, to be righteous, to be holy. Take unto you the Crown of Religion, better then a crown of starrs, all you that have the crown of a hoarie head. To perswade you hereunto, let me commend to you these ensuing Considerations.

1. That the case of a wicked old man is very dangerous and dreadfull; if he dye in his sinnes, he shall receive greater damnation: the Furnace of Hell shall be seven times hotter for these, then for young sinners. Oh these bundles of Tares fully ripe, these old rotten Faggots of Bryers and Thornes, (so wicked men are called) how suddainly, how terribly, will they burne? Certainly it shall be more tolerable for *Er* and *Onan*, (who were cutt off betimes in their sinnes) in the day of Judgment then for the sinners of a hundred yeares old.

2. The case of a wicked old man, although it be very *dangerous*, yet it is *not desperate*: Some old festered soares have been healed; some old Chronick diseases have been cured; 'tis not impossible to bow an old oake, yea to bend the very heart of oake; artcan doe that. God is a Chirurgeon can heale old soares, a Physitian can cure old Diseases; he hath an Arme can bow the heart of Oake; he that can of stones raise Children to *Abraham*, can if he please, and when he please, of old sonnes of *Belial*, make Children of God. He that raised up *Lazarus*, after he had been dead *fourre dayer*, can raise up sinners, who have been dead in sinnes and trespasses, to the life of grace, to the life of faith, after they have been spiritually dead *fourfcore years*. *The houre cometh and now is*, saith Christ, *Joh: 5. 25. When the dead shall heare the voyce of the sonne of God, and they that heare shall live.*

Note, 'tis said, *the dead without any limitation or restriction* to any number of dayes, moneths, or years, how long they have been dead : The dead shall heare the voyce of the Sonne of God and live. Again the possibility of the conversion of an old man seems to be granted, or supposed, by our Saviour, in his conference with *Nicodemus*, *Job: 3. 4, 5, 6, 7.* where our Saviour denyes not the Regeneration of an old man, but taxeth *Nicodemus* his grosse ignorance, in thinking an old man, if he be borne againe, must needs enter into his mothers Wombe, when he is old.

3. Although the conversion of an old sinner is not absolutely *impossible*, yet 'tis a *hard work*; 'tis a rare and marvellous work: If a Bone be many years out of joynt, it is exceeding difficult to set again, now sinners are Members out of joynt, as is intimated *Galath: 6. 1.* ~~magis~~ set such an one in joynt again. When our Saviour Christ raised *Lazarus*, *Job: 11.* we find that it cost him more then to raise *Jairus* Daughter newly dead, or the Widdow of *Naim*'s son carried forth towards buriall, he wept, he groaned in spirit, he prayed, he called upon *Lazarus* with a lond voyce, *Lazarus come forth*, and he troubled himself, ~~in~~ *to teach us how hard a matter it is to raise an old sinner from the death of sinne to the life of grace.* I have read that about three hundred and sixty years after Christ, there was an old man, who had been a Pagan all his dayes before, who in his old age hearkened after Christ, and said he would be a Christian. *Simplicianus* hearing him say so, would not believe him; but when the Church saw him a Christian indeed, there was shouting for gladnesse, and singing in every Church, *Caius Marius Victorinus is become a Christian!* An old sinner to become a young Saint is a great wonder. But yet because the

Conversion

Conversion and Salvation of old sinners is not impossible, let me perswade and direct the oldest sinners of all, that hear me this day, to turn their feet into the way of righteousness, to accept of Salvation *inter pontem & fontem*, (betwixt the bridge and the water, as we say,) to accept of a pardon when they are just turning off the ladder; to accept of life now they are at the point of death; hear all ye old men and your souls shall live: Our Lord Jesus Christ is able and willing and ready to save old sinners; if you will accept of him for your Saviour upon his own (that is upon very honourable) termes.

Beloved, there is yet hope concerning your soules: God is willing to pluck you yet as fire-brands out of the burning; to rescue you out of the mouth of the Lyon, the roaring lyon; to save you out of the belly of hell, that is, out of the belly of that great *Leviathan*, who in his thoughts hath already swallowed you up. Oh therefore, now God calls to you, saying, *How long! How long!* *When will it once be? Return, return, why will you dye?* Let every soul of you Eccho back again, surely *this is a faithfull saying & worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of which I am chiefe*, and again, *How shall I escape, If I neglect such great salvation?* God forbid but that this goodnesse of God should lead me to repentance. Thus reason or commune with thy own soul, before it be too late. Loe I have given the devill (God's and my soul's enemie) the most generous refined wine, my young and sprightly dayes; and will God now accept, can God find in his heart to accept of dregs? of my old age? The devill has had the finest flower, and will God be contented with the bran? the devill and my sins have had a full harvest, and will God to whom first fruits and all is due, be satisfied with

with gleanings the devill has had the first-lings the best and fattest of the flock , and will God accept of the halt, the lame and the blind in sacrifice? Oh the height, and depth, and breadth of the mercy of God! Oh my soul, my soul thou Shulamite, return, return. I beseech thee by *these mercies of God, that henceforth thou give up thy self a holy and living sacrifice unto God*, which is but *reasonable service*, that *thou redeem the time*; and doe much for God in a little time : And now oh that my age might be renewed like the Eagles , that God would add unto my dayes many years ! that the Sunne of my life might stand still , and not hast to goe down for many years ! till I might be avenged on my lusts, the Enimies of my God, and of my soul ! till I that have done God a great deale of disservice and dishonour , might doe him a great deale of service and honour ! Till I have been as Eminent for holynesse , as ever I have been notorious for Prophanesse ! And now, oh all ye that passe by, tell me, tell me , what such an old sinner as I should doe to be saved?

To this question I answer, that old men must be saved the same way that young men are saved , and that is, by beleeving on the Lord Jesu Christ , the Lord our righteousnesse. Whosoever beleeves on the Lord Jesus Christ, although he be never so old a sinner, shall certainly be saved, shall in no wise perish but have everlasting life. Doest thou see thy self lost in old *Adam*? doest see thy self , as thou art growing up out of that old stock, out of that root of bitterness, fit fewell for Hellfire? doest see a necessity of being born again now thou art old, or else thou must dye eternally ? Art weary of the body of sinne and death , that old man of originall sinne which thou carriest about with thee ? Wouldest with all thy heart have this old man with his deeds crucified

crucified together with Christ? doth it repent thee with-
 all thy heart that thou hast lived so long to so little
 purpose? that thou art ready to goe out of the world
 before thou hast done almost any thing of the work for
 which thou camest hither? Canst find in thy heart to
 come to Christ for salvation, from the hell that is in sin,
 as well as from the hell that sin deserves, before thou
 goest out of the world? Darest venture thy soule upon
 this crucified Jesuſ, and know it is no venture? Is there
 none in heaven or earth, no other Saviour, none that
 thy soul desires in comparison of him? Art resolved in
 the strength of Christ, to live in him whilſt thou livest,
 and to dye in Christ, or for Christ when thou dyest?
 Doest desire in the matter of Justification, to be found
 not having on thy own righteousneſſe, but the righte-
 ousneſſe of Christ, and thereby to appear righteous be-
 fore God; and for the glory of God, and to the Justifica-
 tion of thy Faith before men, doest resolve to endeavour
 that thy hoary head may be found in the way of holyn-
 neſſe and righteousneſſe? If these things and such holy
 motions, resolutions and qualifications as these be in
 thee and abound; Blessed art thou that ever thou waſt
 borne; thou ſhalt not dye, but live; this day I affiſe thee
 salvation is come unto thy ſoul: Jesuſ Christ hath given
 thee life, a new life in thy old age. Men it may be, think
 it almost imposſible, that a valley of dry bones ſhould
 live; and ſay as 'tis *Ezek: 37. can these dry bones live?* who
 would ever have ſaid, that ſuch an old ſinner ſhould e-
 ver have proved a young convert? But God that quick-
 neth the dead, he ſaith to his Prophets, *Propheteſie upon*
these bones, and ſay unto them, oh ye dry bones, hear the
word of the Lord; and who knows but that ſome of these
 dry bones may live? Truely my prayer for these old
 men ſhall be, to the God of my life and theirs, that they

might all live in his sight , that they might all live for ever:And for you all that hear me this day,oh that God would bind up all your souls in the bundle of life ! oh that ye might have part in the first resurrection , that on you the second death might have no power ! oh that ye might be changed from nature to grace, before your change by death come, that your change may be for the better , and not for the worse ! But least any from the possibility of the salvation of the oldest and chiefest sinners take heart to put off their repentance to old age, least any suck poysen from so sweet a flower , take by way of Caution or Antidote these two or three Observations.

1. That old sinners, who have all their time enjoyed the means of grace, have rarely been known to return and repent in their age , when there is but a step betwixt them and death , & so betwixt them and hell.

2. That those labourers in the Parable who came into the vineyard to work at the eleventh hour, were not cald untill the eleventh hour. *Math:20*. The Question was put by an old Indian Sagamore , or governour in New England, to one of the English Ministers; Whether our God and Saviour would receive an old sinner, such as he was. The Minister answered, doubtlesse he would, considering this old man had never heard of Christ 'till his old age, and came in when called.

3. That there was a time, when wifedome stop d her eares at their crie, who refused to hear when she called. *Prov:1.24*. Let not young sinners goe on in their sins, thinking to return when they are old, for that is the way never to live to be old, or if they doe, they rarely repent in age. Yet let not old sinners despaire, whoever coimes unto Christ, he will in no wise cast out.

And

And as for you old men, whose hoarie heads are fountid in the way of righteousnesse, Goe on and prosper, and the Lord be with you; Be, as *Noah* was, Preachers of righteousnesse in your generation; See that ye shine as lights in the midst of a crooked generation. Be examples of holinesse to younger ones; call upon them: to remember their Creatour betimes, in the dayes of their youth; teach them the way they shoule goe, that they may not forsake it when they are old. And especially ye who are fathers and mothers, let the soules of your children be precious in your eyes: doe not offer your sons and daughters unto devills, and bring them forth and up to the great *Abaddon*, or murtherer of soules for want of religious education, Be earnest with God, night and day with teares and Prayers, and with your children by instruction, reprehension, correction, exhortation, that so your children may rise up and call you blessed, may blesse God for you, and with you. Oh what a joy and rejoicing, ye pious fathers and mothers, will it be to you, to meet Jesus Christ at the great day, with such like words as he used to his father, Loe here are we and the children thou hast given us; of all thou hast given us, have we lost none; there's never a son or daughter of perdition amongst them; *thine they were, thou gavest them us, and they have kept thy word.*

To conclude all, men, brethren, and fathers, I beseech you to suffer the word of exhortation, I speak unto you *Young men*, and exhort, saying, Be ye *righteous*, that ye may be *old*; this will be your *crown*, and the *length* of your dayes. I speak unto you *old men*, and exhort saying, Oh be ye *righteous* and *religious*, this will be your *crown*, and *glory*, better then that of a *hoarie* head; be *holy*, and ye shall be ~~happy~~, *living well*, and live for ever. And ye that have been *young*, and *religious*, and *old & religious*

religious too, young Saints & old Saints, Oh be not weary, faint not, hold out, ye are not far from the kingdome of heaven, you are near the Goal, your labour and tra-vaile is almost at an end, you shall have crown for crown, for this *corruptible crown of glory of old age*, you shall have a crown of glory, which is reserved in heaven for you, which is *incorruptible*: your old bodyes shall be new cast in the grave, as in a new *mould*, and all the *wrinkles, cracks, and flaws*, shall be mended: and whereas you have now a crown of glory upon your *head* in your old age, you shall then have a *body* all glorified, and all glorious, you shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ, that is, you shall shine as the Sunne in the kingdome of your Father. Instead of *long life on earth*, you shall have *eternal life in heaven*: You shall sit down with the holy Patriarcks, *Abraham, Isaack, and Jacob* in the kingdom of heaven. Yea thus blessed and glorious shall ye all be, both young and old, who are found, living and dying, in the way of righteousness.

FINIS.

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